

REMARKS

This response is offered in reply to the office action of December 13, 2004.

Applicants acknowledge and appreciate the allowance of claims 8, 9, and 15-17. Applicants also appreciate the indicated allowability of the subject matter of claims 4 and 5 in the office action. The subject matter of claim 5 corresponds to the subject matter of claim 8, which is allowed, such that claim 5 has been canceled to avoid claim redundancy. Claim 15 has been amended to place it in better form. The subject matter of claim 17 corresponds to the subject matter of claim 15, which is allowed, such that claim 17 has been canceled to avoid claim redundancy.

In paragraph 1 of the office action, the drawings are objected to in that the reference numeral 13c" appears in the drawings but is not mentioned in the specification.

Applicants have amended the specification at page 6 to insert the reference numeral 13c". This amendment is believed to conform the specification and the drawings and to overcome the objection to the drawings. Reconsideration of the objection is requested.

In paragraph 3 of the office action, claims 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph as indefinite.

Applicants have amended claim 16 and canceled claim 17 in a manner that overcomes the Section 112 rejection. Reconsideration of the rejection is requested.

In paragraph 7 of the office action, claims 1 and 10 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) in view of US Patent 4,347,810, especially Figure 3.

Applicants disagree with this rejection since the U shaped section 16 of Figure 3 of the '810 patent to which the examiner refers is welded to the webs 2 (column 3, lines 7-9), not to the tubes 1. In order to advance prosecution however, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 10 to incorporate subject matter of claim 4, which is indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

As a result, claims 1 and 10 now are believed to be in allowable condition.

In paragraph 8 of the office action, claims 1, 6, 10, and 12 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) in view of US Patent 6,773,048.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 10 to incorporate subject matter of claim 4, which is indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

As a result, claims 1, 6, 10, and 12 now are believed to be in allowable condition.

In paragraph 9 of the office action, claims 1, 6, 10, 12, and 14 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) in view of US Patent 2,205,797.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 10 to incorporate subject matter of claim 4, which is indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

As a result, claims 1, 6, 10, 12, and 14 now are believed to be in allowable condition.

In paragraph 11 of the office action, claims 2, 3, 7, 11, and 13 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) in view of US Patent 6,773,048.

Applicants believe these claims are in allowable condition since they depend from allowable claims. Moreover, with respect to claim 3, the '048 patent nowhere suggests that the edge of a metal bridging patch can be drawn arc welded to a metal tube. The '048 patent is utterly silent and non-suggestive in this regard. The same applies to claims 7 and 13 since the '048 patent is utterly silent and non-suggestive of the claimed features.

As a result, claims 2, 3, 7, 11, and 13 now are believed to be in allowable condition.

In paragraph 12 of the office action, claims 7, 13, and 18 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) in view of US Patent 2,205,797.

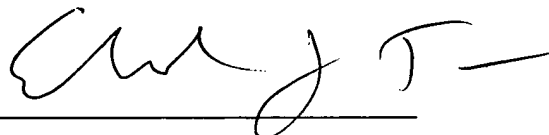
Applicants believe claims 7 and 13 are in allowable condition since they depend from allowable claims. Moreover, the '797 patent nowhere suggests the features of these claims. Claim 18 has been canceled.

As a result, claims 7 and 13 now are believed to be in allowable condition.

Applicants have added new claims 19, 20, and 21 which are believed to be allowable also. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fee for new claims 19, 20, and 21 to my deposit account No. 20-1124.

Allowance of the pending claims is requested.

Respectfully submitted,




Edward J. Timmer Reg. No. 27402

Enclosures: Postal Card

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service under 37 CFR 1.8 as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner For Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on March 14, 2005.



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